CHICAGO TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO TI-99/4A USERS GROUP

LOOK FOR US ON DELPHI
PICTURES OF 6TH ANNUAL FAIRE
NEW HOT LINE NUMBER

JANUARY 1989
EDITOR: Bob Demeter

THE JANUARY MEETING. . .

Sat. January 7. From 1pm to 3 pm in the Community Room at the Brick Yard Mall. Possible demo on F-DOS by Maksimik

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GROUP'S BBS # 312 345-4136
NEW HOT LINE # 312 869-4304

Where it's at this month..

President Speaks	Don Jones	Page 1
Clone or Geneve	Nick Iacovelli Jr.	Page 5
Membership News	James Brooks	Page 8
Minutes by Marcy	Marcy Brun	Page 9
Oh Forth	Tony Zlotorzynski	Page 13
3 Cents	Owen Mayer	Page 15
Twas the night...	Tocoma Informer	Page 18
Geneve Support	Don Jones	Page 19
PR Tour part III	Oscar Bretana	Page 26
Tech Talk II	Mike Maksimik	Page 28
Notes from Editor	Bob Demeter	Back cover

Contributing artists: Buzz Krantz, Dan Gronowski, Danny Goldstein, Anne Dhein and BD

GROUP'S HOTLINE 312 869-4304

MEETING DATES

Excluding the Faire, all meetings will be held the first Saturday of the month. All meetings will be held from 1pm to 3pm in the Community Room of the Brick Yard till further notice. If you know of a better more convenient place, please let us know.

The Chicago Times is published 10 TImes a year from Sept. to June. Chicago TImes is in no way affiliated with Texas Instruments. We are supported solely by our subscribers and advertisers. Subscriptions are free with membership to the Chicago TI 99/4A User's Group. The Chicago TImes is also distributed free to any User's Group that wishes to reciprocate. Articles within these pages may be re-printed by other User's Group Publications provided credit is given the Chicago Times as the original source of the article. Comments and letters are welcome. We also accept submissions of original articles and programs.

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS...

Greetings and felicitations to all members of the Chicago Area TI-99/4A Users' Group.

At the last regular meeting of our group, a vote was taken, and all "write-in" ballots were counted. At that time, I was declared the winner of the election and the official president of our group. I pray that I will be worthy of the position, and I will do my utmost to maintain the integrity of our group and the TI community.

Recently, our former treasurer, Len Rovner, finished his work, which was mandated by the executive board, on the by-laws for our club. These by-laws have been uploaded to the group's bbs, and are available for all to download and read, and I suggest that all members do just that, as they provide a valuable FRAMEWORK for the operation of the group. (The by-laws do not CONTROL or determine either the behavior or the direction of the group or that of the executive board; ONLY the general membership does that.) Here, I would like to thank Len for his considerable work and sacrifices. I would also like to make it clear that I fully support him and his work. I also wish to make it abundantly clear that I am completely in favor of the adoption of these by-laws.

Some persons have interpreted these by-laws in such a way as to make it appear that we must support computers other than the TI-99/4A, and its compatible machines, such as the Myarc Geneve 9640 Home Computer. In spite of this narrow and constricting interpretation, this is just not the case. Regardless of whatever wording may be in this document, and regardless of how any persons may choose to interpret it, our group supports ONLY the TI-99/4A, and its compatible machines. In spite of rumors to the contrary, the executive board is in full control of the direction of the group, and the general membership is in full control of the executive board. I feel that this is the proper way of things, in a democracy, and a democracy, to me, is a political system which adheres to the principle of "one man, one vote." And, any political system that differs from this principle, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.

I was elected to the presidency after having made it very clear, publicly, that I, personally, will support ONLY the TI-99/4A, and its compatible machines. I ran as a hard core TI loyalist, and everyone knew this. In other words, everyone knew full well what I stand for and what I represent, and, in the light of my publicly promulgated position, I was elected as the president of this most estimable organization. Given these facts, I feel safe in saying that our group will continue to support, exclusively,

the TI-99/4A, and its compatible machines, for the foreseeable future, and no one should fear any incursions by any other machines, PERIOD.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE!!!

The first thing that was brought to my attention, after I was elected to the presidency, is the fact that our membership files were in a sad state of disarray. This can be attributed to the fact that after I gave up the position of the membership chairman, we were beset by more than our share of problems. Here is a short outline of the difficulties which we faced: 1.) The man who used to pick up our mail, from our p.o. box, became seriously ill. He was in and out of the hospital for quite a few months. During that time, there was no one to get the mail to the members of the group who were responsible for the processing of complaints, library orders, new memberships, and renewals. 2.) As a result of the above mentioned lack of flow of mail and information, a large number of members in good standing were deleted from our data base. 3.) Also, due to the above mentioned lack of flow of our mail and information, some checks were being deposited, into our bank, but library orders were not getting to the librarian and his helpers, so they were not being filled. 4.) We have been in the process of changing data bases, because the present number of members could not be adequately tracked and serviced with the old one, which we were using. 5.) During the change of data bases, some members were inadvertently dropped from our membership rolls, even though they had renewed and were in good standing. 6.) The executive board acted to change the location and the number of the group's bbs. Because of this, members who had used the group's bbs to bring our attention to their problems lost a valuable means of communication. (Because some of our members haven't been getting their newsletters, they are still unaware of the fact that the group's bbs is at a different phone number.) 7.) We have now had two different membership chairmen, since I gave up the job, and 8.) our present chairman, Jim Brooks, was recently in the hospital, due to a severe case of pneumonia. As a result of all of the above, we have been inundated with a plethora of complaints, problems, and dissatisfactions. As we are a voluntary organization, it is extremely difficult to cover a position that has become either temporarily or permanently vacant.

As we have been made aware of existing problems, we have worked very hard to remedy any and all problems which have been given to us. Because of my knowledge of the functioning of the membership chairman's position, I volunteered to take it over, temporarily, until our current chairman, Jim Brooks, gets back on his feet. By the end of this week, all complaints which we have received will have been addressed, but I am now worried about complaints which have not been

brought to our attention. (I say this, because I found, in my work on the present data base files, that there were some members who were completely dropped from our rolls, even though they had renewed and were in good standing, but they never complained or made us aware of the error. Those individuals, who I am able to identify, who have suffered this error, have been given a membership renewal, for next year, at no cost to them.) Relative to this, I have initiated a program to eliminate all problems in as short a time as possible. To be specific, here is what I have done: a.) With the consent of the executive board, I have moved the group's hot-line to my home. The new number is now (312)869-4304; this number should be functional by the time that you receive this newsletter. If you receive no answer, please try again in a day or so. b.) As I said above, I have temporarily taken over the membership chairman's responsibility. By the end of this week, I will have dealt with all problems which we have received, to date, and, as Jim is much stronger now, I will have returned the files and the responsibilities back over to the current chairman. c.) I am now requesting here (and I will mention it on the local TI bulletin boards), that anyone, who has experienced ANY problem(s) or difficulties, in ANY area of our group's operation, should direct these complaints to me. I can be contacted in the following ways: 1.) I will receive letters, sent to me, via the group's p.o. box. (If you do write to me, please be sure to write my name on the envelope, and mark it with the word "PROBLEM.") 2.) I can be seen in person, at the group's regular meetings. 3.) I can be reached on the group's electronic bulletin board. (The new telephone number of the group's bbs is (312)345-4136, and my identification number is #168.) 4.) I can be reached on Hank Ellermann's fine bbs, The Chicago Connection, at (312)453-7831. (There, my membership number is #8.) 5.) Finally, I can be reached at the above mentioned hot-line (really a "PROBLEM LINE"), 24 hours a day. Here, you will probably be answered by our answering machine, but if you leave sufficient contact information, I promise to return all calls, as soon as I can. (THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT A FLAKE MACHINE!!!) Once I have been made aware of your problem(s), I will make sure that it is given to the proper person and dealt with, as soon as is humanly possible. Right now, what I most need is a statement of each member's problem(s). Therefore, I am requesting that all present and former members of this group, who have experienced some difficulties or who have any sort of dissatisfactions with the group, please contact me, IMMEDIATELY and make a statement of their problem(s). I also request that anyone, who hears of any individual's problems, on any other bbs's, which are not in the TI community, please make a record of the contact information on that individual and get that information to me. I will then be beset with the challenge of giving some satisfaction to those who have suffered in any way, as a result of the operation of our group. Also, if you have sent in complaints

before, on numerous occasions, but these complaints were seemingly unanswered or unresponded to, I am humbly requesting that you make one further attempt, to resolve your problem(s), by contacting me. In other words, if we have not been able to solve your difficulties, with the group, in the past, PLEASE give us, at least, ONE MORE CHANCE.

By checking your mailing label, you will notice that there is a slash ("/"), followed by either an 88, an 89 or a 90. This numeral is an indication of when you are renewed up to. If this is incorrect, or if there is anything wrong with the information on your mailing label, please contact us immediately. We promise to resolve the problem(s). Also, if you have NOT renewed your membership, please attempt to understand our past dilemmas and consider renewing your membership for another year.

Those members who paid an additional $3.00, last year, for an "On-going non-attending member" status, will still receive their newly revised sample disk and new library listing. I hope that we can do this by early 1989. Because of the difficulty of the implementation of this idea, the status will be dropped, as soon as those members who paid the extra $3.00, for it, are taken care of. Members will be apprised of our progress, in this area, in the pages of this newsletter. There will also be a forthcoming discussion of the group's general membership policies, in our next executive board meeting. After there has been a clarification of this matter, it will be presented, here, for your approbation, in our newsletter.

In conclusion, please help us to keep our group strong in '89. You can best do this by VOLUNTEERING. Our biggest problem is to get people to volunteer. Here we have an organization of about 600 active members, and only about 30 of those members are doing ALL of the work, and WITHOUT PAY, OF ANY KIND. Please consider this. Also, it is in each members best interest to volunteer. I say this because I know that those who do the most are also those who gain the most. Want to learn more? Then get involved. If you do, I promise you that you will learn much more than if you merely pay your $18.00 and sit back and demand supportative services. If you don't believe me, then try it out. You won't be disappointed. (Though it is only remotely related to this subject, I suggest that all members attempt to find the December issue of PC Magazine. There is an article there, starting on page 222, by Deborah Asbrand, that mentions the TI community in general, and our group in particular. I will discuss it, briefly, next month.)

Here, I would also like to thank the last, former president, and now the vice-president of this group, my good friend, Hank Ellermann, for all of his help and support during this critical time of my transition, into this position. I would

also like to give my thanks to those who have supported me in the past and who will continue to do so in the future. I would also like to thank my wife for her help, support, and understanding, relative to this difficult responsibility. I would like to thank all of the active members of the executive board and those members whose activities have supported our group in the past, and whose sacrifices make our organization function as well as it does. And to all of the members, of this organization, who are spread across the world, I extend to all of you all of the blessings that I have to offer. I shall remain,

Faithfully yours,
Don Jones
President
Chicago Area TI Users' Group

endit

IBM CLONE OR GENEVE WHAT WAY SHOULD I GO?

This article is being written because a few people in the Chicago group have parts of an IBM clone and wanted to know what else they needed to put it together.

Lets start with what we have on a Geneve.

COST ABOUT $500.00
COMPLETE WITH 80 COL COLOR CARD, GAME,AND CLOCK TI-99/4A
SOFTWARE SUPPORT-HIGH PRICED (MY-ART and other around $100.00), some compatibility with the 99/4a and plenty of DISAPPOINTED Geneve owners anxious to get the machine to work.

A IBM CLONE should consist of a

fliptop case $35.00
150 watt power supply $35.00
101 key keyboard $35.00
2 floppy drives $140.00 you can use your TI-drives a
motherboard 0k memory $65.00 they are compatible.
640k ram 120ns $240.00

and the following which is on one card in my clone system.

floppy drive controller
CGA color card - support 4 colors. EGA card supports 16
clock colors. $100.00 CGA is a minor
game port disadvantage compared to a
rs232 port Geneve.

pio port
light pen interface
mouse interface

Juko multi-function card
(my card for above) $109.00

TOTAL	$659.00

Both systems should use but don't need a monitor. IBM clone you may have to have a composite monitor or interface your TI modulator to the CGA card. Monitor price range about $200.00 +

Both Systems also supports hard disks. Again the main difference is price.
The Myarc hard disk ctrl (which also supports the 99/4a) is about $300. The clone price is about $150.00. The hard drives runs 200+ for both machines.

The above prices are estimated. You may be able to get it for under $500.00 by shopping around (computer shopper) and buying what is call bare system.

BARE SYSTEMS consist of only part of the items listed above. If looking at a bare system take note of what above items are missing and notice if keyboard may be 84 keys, or not included.

SOFTWARE SUPPORT for IBM is available via bbs's There are good freeware term programs,word processor, etc. All there for the taking.

All IBM clones are usually plug in parts. To put together a IBM clone, do the following.

#1 Open case ,Put in power supply and motherboard populated with your ram.
#2 Plug power supply to motherboard.
#3 Plug any cards you bought into motherboard.
#4 Install floppy drives and plug into power supply.
#5 Close case and install keyboard.
#6 plug in monitor.
#7 get a copy of DOS. Put it in drive A:
#8 turn on power and you should be ready to start.

The above may be a simplify version of putting together a clone but try it anyway. I bought my clone as a complete package and when I opened it up I was surprised that nothing was in it. I could have put it together myself with faster ram and better quality drives. If you wish to see my clone system see me at a meeting and get directions to my house. REMEMBER TO SUPPORT NO IBM AT A TI-MEETING UNLESS IT IS TO

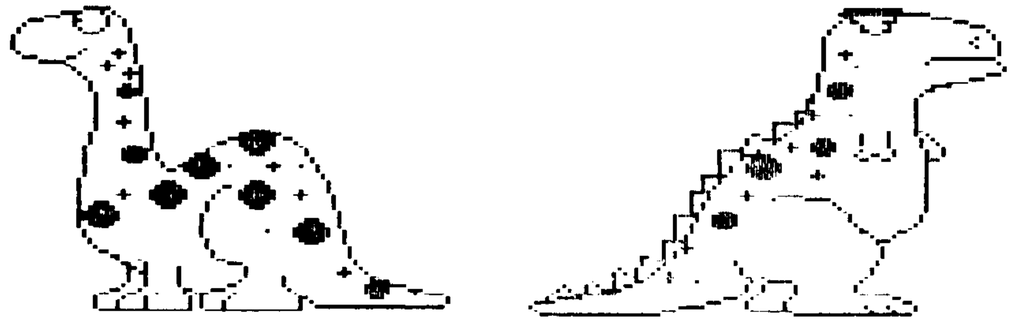
PROVE A POINT OR SHOW A COMPARISON BETWEEN IBM + GENEVE. I do a good job of keeping the 2 (TI AND CLONE) separate.

A purchase of a good DOS book may be required to help you get a understanding of the commands. This comes with on the Geneve but most of the info in it doesn't work or has been change. This makes the book a big paper weight or fire hazard.
When comparing the clone price to the Geneve price I can't see why anyone would purchase a Geneve. If you know why let me know and don't say speed. The IBM clones runs fast enough for most applications and the software support is there.

You can make the TI execute faster. Buy a gramulator and update the TI operating system or buy MILLER GRAPHIC XB. From what I heard this make XB zoom.

Nick Iacovelli Jr.

EDITOR NOTE: Keyboards are about $60.00. Power supplies are closer to 60 or 80 dollars. The 9640 price includes DOS and a Word Processor. MS-DOS runs about $100.00 extra. Word Perfect 5 costs $200.00. The Myarc HFDC supports 4 more floppies SS/SD - DS/QD and 3 - 134 Meg drives. MS-DOS only supports 30 megs each. -bd.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS AND VIEWS

by James Brooks

Hello from the membership department(Oh, what a time at the Faire) now that the Faire has come and gone. Sorry I didn't get the article in the November issue so I will have to make it up now. I am still reveling from the effect of the Faire, In fact I had to take a vacation in the Hospital to recuperate. The Faire of 1988 was the Greatest ever(I thought) and many vendors left with just money after selling completely out. I only had a chance to get inside for a couple of short runs around (and I missed a lot that I had hoped to see) and spent some money too. The Membership table had a continuous line of visitors and inquiries. The most impressive gentleman I met was one that flew over from Germany just to come to the Faire Weekend. (We have members all over the world but this was the only one from overseas that I saw personally) During the Faire, we had 45 brand new members and over 100 renewals. Since I have taken on the job of membership chairman, I have found a few complaints and as soon as possible, these will be taken care of. There seems to be a backlog of missed issues and we will try to catch up. Please look at your mailing label! Is your address CORRECT with ZIP CODE? If not, please send in the card provided to correct your mailing label so that we will have the correct information in the files. Some records are short printed due to the length of the name, address or something, so let us know as soon as possible (Do it now!) so that your membership card will be correct. We are getting some returned because the forwarding time has expired and we did not know you had moved, let us know your change of address also. Well enough of that, I'm looking foreword to 1989, the TI LIVES again year. There was lots of new and updated software at the Faire and I look forward to playing with some of it, namely new version of TELCO, latest version of Myarc's MDOS (just did get a squint of it running at the Faire), and others. Old members, now is the time for renewal so as not to miss any NEWSLETTERS. Bye bye for now. See you at the next meeting.

Confucius say "Much easier to keep up walking than get behind and have to run".

TIME TO RENEW TIME TO RENEW TIME TO RENEW TIME TO RENEW

SEASON'S GREETING TO ALL FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

MINUTES BY MARCY

The Executive Board Meeting of December 3, 1988 was brought to order at 11:25 am.

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The first subject of discussion was the 1988 TI Faire/Convention which was held November 11th, 12th, and 13th at the Holiday Inn in Rolling Meadows, Illinois. It was agreed that this year's faire was a big success. It was organized well and run smoothly with only a few minor notations for improvement. Everyone agreed that the plan of having the whole event in one facility worked better than if we would move the Faire back to Triton College when it is finished being remodeled. Marcy Brun has already made a tentative hold on all the banquet rooms of the Holiday Inn Rolling Meadows for the first weekend in November of 1989. It was voted and passed that she should have the hotel make up contracts for those dates and confirm them with the deposit.

One thing that was noticed at the Faire was that one or two of our group members were selling their own used equipment while manning our group's tables. (For example the announcement table, group T-shirts, back newsletter articles, etc.) This was not fair to other group members that would have liked to have sold their used equipment. One suggestion that was presented towards this was to promote and have a section for our local group members to sell their used equipment to our out-of-town group members. (for example the tailgate exhibitors at Hamvention in Dayton, Ohio which has been running for 37 years, is a three day show, and has over 200 exhibitors.)

There was a discussion about this incident and suggestion. The facts were brought up that we are not a 200 booth show and are only in our sixth year. Also the fact was presented that TI has a very limited following in regards to attendees and also vendors. Our TI Faire/Convention has always been produced to be a first class operation. The unwritten rule that has always been followed in producing shows is that the "paid exhibitors" come first. If we start to promote the sale of cheap, used equipment, we would be undercutting our vendors. This would be cutting our own throat. The vendors would not be making the sales that they came to make to the attendees and they would soon decide that we did not need or want their new equipment any more. This would lead to our first class TI Faire with only used equipment for sale. In other words, a flea marketor swap meet.

There has always been behind the scenes selling of used equipment, which can't be stopped. Therefore, the motion was voted and passed against anyone using the group's booths for personal gain by selling their own used or new equipment. Another motion was voted and passed for having a bulletin board in the lobby for people to post public messages.

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At the meeting it was discussed that the Hot Line Number is no longer in existance. This is because the Hot Line had been moved around so much in the past year and the number had changed so many times. That at this point no one really knows what number the Hot Line is. The phone recorder was being used for the Faire Hot Line. Since we don't need the recorder right now, it will be given to Chuck Hoff, the Equipment Chairman, until it is needed again for the 1989 Faire.

A week after the meeting, Don Jones contacted a majority of te Executive Board to ask if he could set up and manage the Hot Line. Don feels that since he is the new President, he would like to keep a handle on any questions or complaints to keep the members updated. The majority of the Executive Board felt that this would be a good idea. Therefore, the new Hot Line Number is 312-869-4304.

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Nick Iacovelli, the group's new Bulletin Board Sysop, would like to sell the floppy drives and buy new equipment. Nick has the authorization to buy a hard drive for the bulletin board, but he feels it does not need that. Nick feels that there is enough room on floopy drives. There was a discussion regarding this. The motion was to authorize Nick to sell our existing drives, receive up to $150 from the treasury, and buy new equipment to keep the board running. This motion was voted and passed.

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At the Faire in November a representative from Delphi Communitations Service talked to Bob Demeter regarding the Chicago Area TI Users Group having a special section on the Delphi System. Bob stated he would be uploading our library listing along with information about becoming a member and a membership application. Also Bob will upload a sample of our newsletter once in a while. This would be considered advertizement for our group. In return we would be promoting more callers onto the Delphi System. The motion was voted and passed that Bob should explore this possibility further with Delphi and report back to the Executive Board at the January meeting.

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Nick Iacovelli stated that he has been storing all the back issues of Micropendium and wanted to know what he should do with them. It was recalled that Grant Schmalgemeier had arranged with Micropendium to send us so many issues each month for the price of $25 per month. There was also an understanding that we could return any extras and receive a refund. Nick was instructed to make arrangements with Grant to have all the back issues returned and to collect the refund for our group.

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Len Rovner, our Treasurer, stated that the application for the Exempt Status was completed and that the IRS has had it for a month now. At this point, they have not asked for any additional informationand they have not stated that they have given us the Expempt Status. However, they have let us know that there is a $300 filing fee. The motion was voted and passed that Len should pay the $300 filing fee and continue to get us the Exempt Status.

Len is still working on the past four years of financials. He is hoping that by the January meeting he will have all the financial reports completed to bring them to the meeting for discussion.

Our group's By-Laws have been finalized and are now on a disc which will be put into the library for all members to request if they would like a copy.

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Stan Byer is asking for donations for TI systems to be given to a church and school group to be used by students who are interested in learning about computers. The church and school group would also be very greatful if anyone would be interested in donating some time to help teach the students how to get started on the computers. If you would like to make a donation of equipment or your time, please send a note to Stan Byer c/o the Chicago Area TI Users Group, P.O. Box 578341, Chicago, IL 60657.

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It was mentioned that the lastest issue of PC Computing had a article published in it about our users group. This article states that our group is the largest users group.

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There was a discussion on how the membership applications are being handled. When Don Jones was Membership Chairman

he had a group of volunteers that lived near him to keep all the membership orders and records processed quickly. About a year ago Don stepped down and turned the Membership Chairmanship to Mat Mullen. Near the end of the summer of 1987, Mat had to devote more of his time to his job and had to step down as Membership Chairman. At that point the position was taken over by James Brooks. Before James could get a good handle on his duties he was taken ill and put into the hospital. Therefore, this leads us to the fact that our membership records including new and renewal applications are in a bit of a mess at this moment.

Hank Ellerman, Don Jones and a few other members met in a private meeting to discuss what to do to clean up the membership records and get all the 1989 applications processed. It was decided that Don Jones would re-establish his group "The Evanston Connection" to get all the orders processed and all the records in order until James Brooks could get back on his feet again. If you would like to get involved with your users group, think about becoming a member on the Membership Committee to help James Brooks process the records. Contact Don Jones through the new Hot Line 312-869-4304.

There was also a motion that was voted and passed to form a group to research and report on how much it would cost for us to hire a professional service to handle our membership applications and records in the event that a volunteer does not step forward.

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Mike Chappell stated that he has a lot of t-shirts left over from the Faire. He suggested that we sell them at the meetings instead of storing them until the 1989 Faire. It was recalled by someone that the t-shirts were brought to the meetings a year or two ago and not many were being sold. However, a lot do get sold at the Faire. Therefore, it was decided that someone will store all the t-shirts to be sold at the 1989 Faire.

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Bob Demeter is looking into getting a special Postal Permit Number for our group for mailing the newsletters. This should save us money on postage each month. He will give a full report at the January meeting.

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Because of the membership applications not being process quickly and also a few complaints about library orders, Tony Zlotorzynski will act as trouble shooter by receiving any complaint letters and looking into the matter and getting

things straighten out.

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The Executive Board Meeting was ajourned at 1:10 pm.

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The General Membership Meeting started at 1:15 pm.

The voting ballots for the 1989 officers which were mailed in were counted and also a hand count of members that were present and did not submit their ballots were counted. The new elected officers for 1989 are as follows: President Don Jones, Vice President Hank Ellermann, Treasurer Oscar Bretana, Secretary Marcy Brun. Also Buzz Krantz was elected as Sargent At Arms.

Sandy Bartels has volunteered to be the Chairman (or Chairwoman) of our 1989 TI Faire/Convention. She will be assisted by Marcy Brun and Christine Chambers.

A demonstration was given by Bud Mills of Bud Mills Services located in Toledo, Ohio. This was a demonstration of his new product, the P-Gram Card.

The balance of the December meeting was our Annual Swap Meet. Members were buying and selling equipment all afternoon.

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You're welcome to join us at the next meeting, January 7th, in the Community Room at the Brickyard Mall in Chicago. The more, the merrier.

Submitted by: Marcy Brun, Secretary.

OH FORTH

by Tony Zlotorzynski

HELLO OUT THERE IN RADIO LAND. THIS IS YOUR FRIENDLY ___ HO BOY, THIS IS COMPUTER STUFF.

LET ME TRY AGAIN ! RADIO SCHOOL DIDN'T BOTHER ME DID IT DIDIT ? NOW TO QUIT SCREWING AROUND.

OK. HERE IT IS. THIS IS THAT CRAZY POLOCK POTTYMOUTH AGAIN. WHERE I ASK THE QUESTIONS AND NO ONE ANSWERS THEM.

I GOT A LETTER FROM A TI99/4A USER AND ALSO A MEMBER OF OUR USERS GROUP. HE HAS HAD A TI99 FOR FOUR OR FIVE YEARS

NOW. AND IS WANTING TO LEARN THE FORTH LANGAUGE FOR THE TI. HA ! HE HAD TO ASK ME. I DON'T KNOW FORTH. I CAN'T HELP HIM. I CAN'T GO OVER TO HIS HOME AND LEARN WITH HIM. HE JUST LIVES TOO FAR AWAY. HE LIVES IN TIANJIN,CHINA . NOW HOW CAN I POSSIBLY HELP? ONLY WAY I CAN HELP IS TO ASK ANY OF YOU USERS WHO KNOW FORTH TO WRITE SOME ARTICLES ON FORTH. PLEASE, IF ANYONE WILL SIT DOWN AND WRITE SOME TUTORS ON FORTH AND HOW IT WORKS, WHAT IT CAN DO, AND ANYTHING ELSE TO DO WITH FORTH, IT WILL GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO GET AS MANY VIEWS OF FORTH AS POSSIBLY. MAYBE EVEN A PROGRAM IN FORTH ! WE ALL MIGHT GET A CHANCE TO LEARN SOMETHING FROM YOU.

OH YEAH, HE IS IN CHINA. WE, THE CHICAGO TI99/4A USERS GROUP, HAVE MEMBERS ALL OVER THE WORLD NOW. THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH TRYING TO HELP EACH OTHER ALL OVER THE WORLD. TRY IT!

OK, NOW TO THE OTHER GOOD STUFF. WHY DOES BIG BOB PULL HIS HAIR OUT WHEN I PUT A PROGRAM IN THE NEWSLETTER ? WELL, I KNOW THE ANSWER NOW. DO YOU ?
(answer) AFTER EACH LINE OF ANY PROGRAM, HE HAS TO PUT IN A CARRIAGE RETURN. AND THAT JUST DRIVES HIM NUTS. LOTS OF WORK ! SO, I'LL JUST PUT IN A FEW SMALL LINES. JUST ENOUGH TO LOOK AT . STUDY THEM PLEASE. BOY, I WISH RICH KLINE WAS DOING THIS. HE IS A WHOLE LOT BETTER THEN I AT PROGRAMMING.
OH WELL, THANKS! TONY Z.

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LINES 160, 161  171 - THERE IS A TRICK IN THEM.
100 CALL INIT :: CHAR(95,"00003C08103C00FF")
140 DIM A$(99),B$(99)
160 DISPLAY AT(15,5)ERASE ALL BEEP:" Drive (1-2): ?"
161 CALL KEY(5,K,S):: IF K49 THEN 161 :: IF K>50 THEN 161
:: IF S=0 THEN 161
162 K=K-48 :: ZZ$=CHR$(K+48):: C$="DSK"ZZ$"." :: DISPLAY
AT(15,19):"=";C$:"": "":"                "
171 OPEN #1:C$,INPUT ,RELATIVE,INTERNAL
```

WELL, I JUST GOT TOO HEAVY ON MY CHEAP HOMEMADE COMPUTER DISK, IT BROKE. WILL SOMEONE WRITE SOMETHING IN ONE OF THE MANY FORTHS WE GOT ? WYCOVE FORTH , TI FORTH , SUPER FORTH , AND THE OTHER FORTHS TOO. I KNOW WE JUST HAVE TO HAVE MORE THEN THREE FORTHS. (THINKING)
THANKS ALL, TONY

P.S., ONE MORE THING, I HAD LIGHTING HIT MY PHONE LINE TWO MONTHS AGO. IT KNOCKED OUT MY RS232,MODEM, PRINTER. MY OWN FAULT. I LEFT IT PLUGGED IN THE PHONE LINE WHILE ALL THE OTHER POWER WAS UNPLUGGED. IT IS ALL WORKING NOW. JUST THOUGHT I'D LET YOU KNOW. LEARN FROM OTHERS , IT'S CHEAPER!

3 CENTS

My previous remarks on this subject were heavily influenced by the writer of the piece on getting kicked off a bbs. I did not mean to detract from the fact that there is plenty in the TI world to keep the avid and advanced user happy. I would say that my TI system is about a million times as complicated as my 35mm camera and 6 lenses, and more interesting to use.

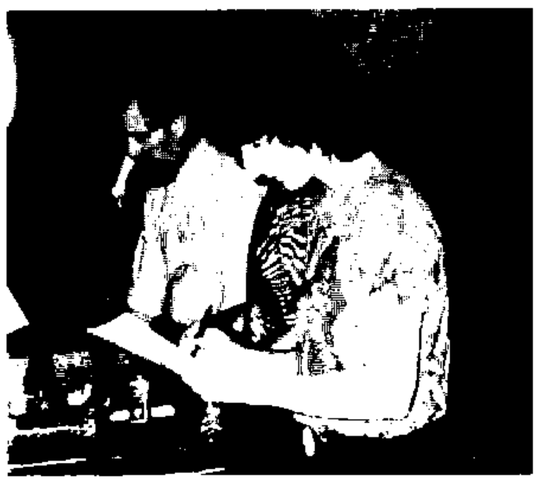
I personally know a TI user who is active in a TI user group and who owns a PC. He is retired and has a lot of time and money. He showed me some very fancy programs on the PC. Like many PC users, he is a 'user' more than a hacker or programmer. He still uses his TI a lot and writes newsletter articles. This is the type of person I do not want to see TIers kick out of user groups or bulletin boards. He doesn't call TI bbs's much probably because he doesn't program much and has little to upload. I also know some TI users who are good Extended Basic programmers but don't call bbs's much because they are busy and because they don't have a lot of equipment to chat about. The users groups should not make these people feel that they have to participate in a hardware or software race to be good supporters. I feel that, for the TI system to be viable for as long as possible, all TI users should feel encouraged to participate at whatever level they are comfortable with, and that we each have something to offer. Of course, PC material should not take up space on TI bbs's unless it can be related to the TI or suggested for translation. Users who no longer own or use a TI should have other clubs and bbs's. Whether the TI system can be viable over the long haul depends on the hardware successors like Myarc and CorComp. When users that want to expand know that software development is being held up on the Geneve because the DOS is still unfinished, they tend to go the PC route. Some go the Mac route because it has a lot to offer for graphics and is a better value.

All of us have a stake in keeping our system alive because it is powerful, useful, educational, economical and entertaining. Also we must realize that economics can change things and that consumers often prefer overpriced things, feeling that they are always better. Except for mathematics, the PC's probably are more powerful but are not as suitable for the home user because of the great cost of being overpowered. I drive a Volkswagen instead of a Mercedes or Corvette because I don't need the power or luxury. There are some people who need to go 200 mph in order to get to work, as Bill Cosby says, but I ain't one of them. It doesn't mean I am not a good driver. The TI has plenty to offer the sophisticated hobbyist.

O. Mayer 7-88

Jack Riley - Myarc

Marcy Brun - Faire Chairwoman



Peter Hoddie - Genial Computerware

Chris Bobbitt - Asgard Software

Bud Mills - Bud Mills Services

Art Byers, Jeff Guido, Jim Horn, ??

Barry Traver - Genial Computerware

Friday Social Mixer

FROM THE TACOMA INFORMER

Twas the night before TI-FAIRE and all thru the house,
Only the COMPUTER was stirring, run by it's own little MOUSE.
The HARD-DRIVE was hung in the PE-BOX with care,
In hopes that some SOFTWARE soon would be there.

The SPRITES were nestled all snug in their GROMS,
While cute LOGO TURTLES danced in their E-PROMS.
And mama with her 32-K and I with my KRACKER,
Had just KEYBOARDED in a GAME after supper.

When out in my system there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my CONSOLE to see what was the matter.
I turn on the SURGE and flipped on the switch,
And my SYSTEM came alive with nary a hitch.

The NOISE and the SOUND in the quiet room,
Made me fall from my chair with a resounding boom.
And what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a giant CRT with a SCREEN crystal clear.

With a little old PROGRAM so lively and quick,
I knew in a INSTANCE, it must be QRAPHIC.
More rapid than LASERS the CURSOR it came,
And WHISTLED and BEEPED and PRINTED each name.

"Now INPUT! Now OUTPUT! Now MICRO and BASIC!"
"On FORTH! ON PASCAL! On ASSEMBLY and 'C'!"
To the top of the PRINTER, To DISKETTE and all
Now PRINT: "Dash away, Dash away, Dash away all."

As SPRITES that before a CALL CLEAR can fly,
Ere they meet with a GCHAR, then do die.
So right to my MONITOR the cursor it flew,
With a RAM full of MEMORY and a RS232.

And then in a NANOSECOND, I heard with a screech,
The CLICKING and CLACKING of KEYS from the SPEECH.
As I lifted my head and was again sitting down,
I saw IMAGES of 99 that came with a bound.

It was shown all in SILVER from it's top to it's SWITCH,
The KEYBOARD was QWERTY and held not a GLITCH.
The SCREEN itself was a cool vivid BLUE,
But could be changed on a whim to a differnt hue.

Its CURSOR how it TWINKLED, Why it looked so merry,
As it raced 'cross the SCREEN with such a scurry.
It's MEMORY was flawless, It's COLOR was superb,
It moved BITS and BYTES with SPEED yet unheard.

It spoke not a word, but went straight to it's work,
And filled all the HARDDRIVE and turn with a jerk.
And changing the SCREEN to a COLOR it chose,
And giving a blink, up to the CRT it arose.

It sprang to my SCREEN, gave a soft little WHISTLE,
And away it did fly like the down on a thistle.
And I saw it PRINTOUT as it went out of sight,
"HAPPY TI-FAIRE TO ALL AND TO ALL A GOODNIGHT"

GENEVE SUPPORT ARTICLE

Howdy Doody there sports fans, and HO, HO, HO!!!

BTW, I have a little riddle to start this article off: Question: What does Christmas have in common with a cat that crosses the Sahara Desert??? Answer: They both have SANDY CLAWS!!!

As you can see, I am really in the holiday spirit, even though I am not of the Judeo-Christian tradition. I still love the spirit of the time. I therefore want to start out by wishing all of my Jewish and Christian friends a most joyous and blessed holiday season, and to everyone, a Happy New Year!!! And to my African American brothers and sisters, I extend to you my most sincere wishes for a most reflective, contemplative, joyous, and meaningful Kwansaa!

In this article, I want to discuss some things that I did not have the opportunity to deal with in last month's article. To begin, I would like to mention that at this year's Faire, there was a fine young man by the name of Mike Connell. He came here, with his parents, all the way from Woodlands, Texas, the home state of our beloved 4A. He had earlier contacted me about writing articles for a bi-monthly newsletter, which he was going to be editing. (As a result of our conversations, some of the articles which you read here will be reprinted in his newsletters.) This newsletter is to be the informational arm of a new organization, which he is forming. He is calling it, National MYARC User's Group. It is an organization which is dedicated to the support of the Geneve 9640 computer. The cost of membership is $30.00 for the first year. Thereafter, the cost will be $15.00. BTW, in spite of the name, they are not affiliated with Myarc, Inc. or any of its affiliates or subsidiaries. If you are interested in joining this new organization, please send a SASE to the following address: Michael Connell, c/o National Myarc User's Group, 11011 Ellwood Street, The Woodlands, Texas 77300. You can also call Mike at (713)367-1047. Mike seems to be a very nice young man, and I wish him the best of luck with his effort. It is good to see such enthusiasm from our youth.

In addition to the above mentioned organization, there is another group, for the support of the Geneve, that is being formed. It is being created by the Amarillo 99/4A Users Group. If you would also like to check into this organization, please write to Steve Eggers, 5715 West 50th, Amarillo, Texas 79109, and ask for more information. It seems that Texas, the state that created the 4A, now creating a heck of a lot of strong support for our fine machine. I urge our Texas brothers and sisters to keep up the great work. We surely appreciate it, up here.

Since this is my last article, for this year, maybe it would be a good time and place to tie up some loose ends and deal with things that I was not able to get to, or forgot to mention, in my previous columns. The first thing that I would like to mention is a great new word processing program called PRESS. It was written by Charles Earl, the same fine programmer who gave us TELCO, the most sophisticated terminal emulator program, in the TI community. Reading the "press release," on PRESS, it looks like PRESS will be the most sophisticated word processing program in our community. I was originally told about it by Chris Bobbitt, a fine programmer, himself, a really nice young man, and, incidentally, a head man at Asgard Software, last September, in Seattle. I was so excited about it that I was prepared to purchase it then and there, sight unseen! Chris said that it would be available at the Chicago Faire. Unfortunately, it was not quite finished, so we only saw the commercial packaging and a beta version, of the program, running. Even seeing only this much was enough to create a great deal of excitement at our Faire. Now, Chris is saying that it should be available by the end of November or the beginning of December. By the time that you read this article, I hope to have possession of this fine piece of software. I also hope to write my next article with it.

When I was in Seattle, to visit their fine Faire, I had the pleasure to see a system called VIDEOFLEX. It was created by Dave Miller, of Miller Communications, at 8815 18th Avenue S.W., Seattle, Washington 98106. (His phone is [206767-0930.) VIDEOFLEX is a sophisticated video imagery system. It is now available to owners of our Geneve computer. To quote the creators of this system, "The system offers a complete range of desktop video functions, including genlock for superimposing computer graphics over live video and extremely clean RGB analog to NTSC composite video. A frame grabber system is being implemented which allows the user to capture a frame of live video and flash digitize the image and store it in a video RAM buffer." Needless to say, this system is intended for purely PROFESSIONAL use. The average person, like me, would have NO use for a system such as this. The suggested retail price for the VIDEOFLEX card, without the frame grabber, is $1195.00. The additional purchase of a 19-inch rack mountable chassis is also

required, to meet the power and voltage regulations of VIDEOFLEX. Its suggest retail price is $400.00. So unless money is no object, for you, or unless you are a professional "video" man in a t.v. station, or a place that produces movies for t.v., or an institution or company that produces educational or training films, then VIDEOFLEX is not for you. If you feel that it is for you, you can get more detailed information from Barb Wiederhold, of the Queen Anne Computer Shoppe, at 6102 Roosevelt Way N.E., Seattle, Washington 98115. Her phone number is (206)522-6558.

Some months ago, Ray Kazmer, the great young programmer who created the WOODSTOCK graphics/demo program, wrote a letter to MICROpendium Magazine, and requested that all further "Free Ware" donations be sent to Sister Pat. Sister Pat, in case you don't read MICROpendium, is a nun, who is a patient, with an incurable lung disease, in a nursing home. There, she has discovered that she has been able to ease the boredom and raise the spirits of some of her fellow patients, by getting them involved with her TI-99/4A. When Ray heard about her use of the 4A, he became a supporter of Sister Pat and her work. In fact, if you came to this year's Faire, you may have seen a gentleman, wearing an orange colored reflector jacket, with a sign asking people to contribute to Sr. Pat. I made a contribution to the cause for Sr. Pat, at that time. I also intend to make contact with Ray Kazmer to compliment him on both his programming work and his highly developed sense of compassion. I suggest that anyone else wishing to contribute to Sr. Pat send their contributions to Ray. His address is, 13225 Azores Avenue, Sylmar, California 91342. And, when you send him a contribution for Sr. Pat (he requests a minimum of $2.00), send him a blank disk in a mailer, with postage, and ask him for some of his latest "fair ware" creations. I am sure that they will put a smile on your face! Also, your contribution will help a lady who has dedicated her life to helping those who are unable to help themselves.

Another disappointment, at this year's Faire, was that Donn Granros, the creator of LEGENDS, a truly great "dungeons & dragons" type game, for the TI and the Geneve, was unable to make the Faire, though it was announced that he would be coming. This was due to the fact that his father-in-law has been gravely ill. Because of this, Donn chose to remain at home, in order to provide support for his wife, at a very difficult time. Our prayers are with Donn and his whole family. At the same time, I would like to mention that I did have the opportunity to speak at length, with Donn. Even though he was unable to make the Faire, he hopes to have at least one of his sequels, to his LEGENDS, by the first quarter of the new year. If you haven't purchased and played this fine game, I strongly recommend that you do. It is the only game that has been able to hold my attention longer than a few days. It is a truly well written program, and I

excitedly anticipate the release of the two promised sequels, which Donn is working on.

Recently, due to my work for the grup, I have had to get involved with William Warren's great program, PR BASE. Earlier, this year, I had tried to get into it, but I was totalty unsuccessful. I didn't know what I was doing wrong, even though I had swme of the best help available. Regarding my help, I was being assisted by Oscar Bretana, a member of our group. Oscar has given demonstrations of PR BASE, and he is now writing an article, for our newsletter, on this fine program. Now, after having read Mike Dodd's article, in the August, 1988 issue of MICROpendium, I am able to use this program with NO problems. (This article is on pages 36 to 37. Again, if you don't have a subscription to MICROpendium, you should seriously consider getting one, as it is an essential source of information for the serious user of Geneve or the 4A.) Regarding this program, I must warn you, YOU MUST READ ALL OF THE DOCUMENTATION!!! It is a fine program, and it works very well, but it requires the close reading of the documentation, in order to get started with it. Once you are "into" using this program, you will probably seldom, if ever, return to reading the "docs." I must also warn you, be sure that you are using version 2.1, of this program, as it is the latest version and the >only version that will work on a Genny. Also make sure that you have John Johnson's Utilities, if you plan to make any serious use of PR BASE. It is his program that gives the user a better means of implementing this program. Then, in conclusion, be sure that you read my friend, Oscar's, articles, on >PR BASE. Relative to Oscar, I might suggest that you send, to our p.o. box, letters addressed to him, with any questions and/or problems regarding your usage of PR BASE. If your question is interesting enough, he may choose to discuss it in the very pages of this newsletter. It should be abundantly clear to all that through our group, there is plenty of support for the use of this fine program.

In case you are interested in knowing what I am using >PR BASE for, read my first article as the president of our group. When I first became a member of the executive board, I was given the job of membership chairman. I was given a data base named, FUTURA MAIL LISTS, for the management of the files and records of the groups hundred or so members. As a result of my work, the group's membership, at various times, began to approach 1000. Because of the increase in the size of our group, the FUTURA program was insufficient for the needs of our group, though it was a very fine program, in the early days of the TI. Now, compared to what is now available for the 4A and Geneve, FUTURA is too slow, too limited, and too inflexible for our needs. It is also incompatible with Geneve. Therefore, at my request, our data base expert, Oscar Bretana, kindly converted all of our data base files into a format that can be read and used by PR

BASE. I only wish that I had had access to this program when I was the membership chairman. It is so fast that I almost find it fun to use.

Lately, some very powerful, complex, and flexible data bases have become available to the TI community. After having spoken to Oscar, I am more or less convinced that PR BASE will be more than sufficient to the needs of the average user. Therefore, if you haven't checked out this program, on your Geneve, I heartily suggest that you do so. Once you get into it, you won't be disappointed.

The next thing that I would like to discuss is the state of M-DOS. Version 1.14 was released by Jack Riley, the vice-president of Myarc, Inc., and placed on the DELPHI Information Service. It requires the use of GPL version 1.04, which was also uploaded, with this latest version of M-DOS. Also uploaded was version 1.21 of MY-Word; earlier versions of this program should not be used with version 1.14 of M-DOS. Also, your AUTOEXEC file must include the following two commands: 1.) TIMODE - This command sets aside memory for operating in the GPL (TI mode). 2.) RAMDISK 120 - This is the largest size of RAM disk that can now be emulated on Geneve. It will allow the user 478 sectors of RAM disk space, and, as with earlier versions of M-DOS, which were released in the third quarter of this year, the contents of the RAM disk are preserved when moving between M-DOS to the GPL mode.

This new version of M-DOS has some other new features that are worth discussing: The first new feature, that I would like to bring to your attention, allows you to load a new AUTOEXEC file, into memory, without re-booting your dos. This is a nice convenience for the user who wants and/or needs to load an AUTOEXEC file with a name other than AUTOEXEC. Another AUTOEXEC file, with the name AUTOEXEC, can be loaded by merely putting the disk, with the file, in physical drive #1 ("A") and pressing the key combination Ctrl-Alt-Del, while in dos. (By typing Ctrl-Shift-Shift, while in dos, you will re-boot the entire system and its dos, and another AUTOEXEC file, with the name AUTOEXEC, will automatically be sought.) But, to load an AUTOEXEC file, with a name other than AUTOEXEC, you must do the following: a.) Give your alternative AUTOEXEC file any legitimate program name that you want, but preceed its name with an ampersand; SHIFT-7 will create this character. b.) Load it from the prompt, which indicates the device where your file resides, in M-DOS, as you would any other ordinary program. If the file is on a disk in drive one, and the name of the file is something like "&NEWFILE," you would type in the command "&NEWFILE," at the "A" prompt and press "ENTER." That's it; now, it's loaded! EDITOR NOTE: An autoexec type file may also be saved without the &. To load it, simply add the & sign after the drive prompt. Example, To load NEWAUTO

from A type A>&NEWAUTO.

Relative to AUTOEXEC files and M-DOS, future versions of our dos will search for an AUTOEXEC file from the following devices, and in the following order: 1.) a Horizon RAM Disk, 2.) a hard drive, and 3.) a physical "floppy" drive. What is nice to consider is that even the more advanced versions of M-DOS will still continue to support my beloved Horizon RAM Disk; I would be very disappointed if its support was discontinued. Relative to our HRD's, I predict that they will continue to be a most useful and helpful tool for the Geneve user, but I don't think that the "Phoenix" version will continue to be as necessary as it presently is. The reason for this prognostication is the fact that Myarc is planning on putting our entire dos and GPL onto an EPROM. There is no firm date for doing this, but it definitely >is in the works. It will require sending our beloved Genny's back to the factory, as the usage of the EPROM will necessitate a small modification of the card, as additional signal lines will have to be wired onto the board. But, once our dos is available to us on an EPROM, we will be able to boot our systems in 3 to 5 seconds, and the "Phoenix" version of the HRD will no longer be necessary. Still, the HRD, itself, will continue to be the same viable and useful tool that it is today, even in the light of the now present hard/floppy disk controller card. (My arguments as to why I still would not want to be without my HRD can be found in earlier installments of this article.) BTW, it seems to me that with the planned implementation of an EPROM, to load our dos and GPL, we Geneve users are quickly approaching the kind of convenience, utility, and speed which we once experienced with our beloved 4A and which no mere "clone" ever has had and probably never will have. Boy, it sure is nice to come back home!!!

Another new feature of this new version of M-DOS is the directory listing. It now looks similar to the listing that we always have had with the ShowDirectory command in MY-Word. This is a small but still a nice improvement, as it is more informative. You will also notice that this new listing now gives the times and the dates that the various files were created. EDITOR NOTE: This feature is only if you are in 80 columns. Those of you using MODE 40 will not see this.

As time progresses, M-DOS continues to evolve into the dos that is discussed and written about in the Myarc Geneve manual, but, unbeknownst to most aficionados of this machine, M-DOS has been slowly but steadily evolving into a dos that is more (that is to say, better) than the one described in the manual. Genny users are now finding more and more undocumented commands and features, which Myarc is having incorporated into M-DOS. The graphic commands, which this version of M-DOS supports, and which were demonstrated at the

1988 Chicago TI Faire, by Jack Riley, is a good example of this. (These same routines have also been uploaded, with documentation, to the DELPHI Information Service.) Another of these undocumented features is the MODE B (or F) [1-16. This command allows the user to modify the color of the screen and/or the characters, respectively, in M-DOS mode. The numbers 1-16 are the standard color code numbers, as designated by TI. The command to change the screen color to dark green would be, "MODE B13." Replacing the "B" with an "F" will modify the color of the characters.

Another new, undocumented command is the one which uses the single, reverse quotation mark ("`"), with the DIR, COPY, or the DELETE commands. By indicating the >type of file (DV, DF, P, etc.) that you want operated on, when using the DIR, COPY, or the DEL commands, and by preceeding the file type with the single, reverse quotation mark, you can choose and control the kind of file, residing at a particular device location, that is operated on. If I have a disk in drive 1 ("A") that is filled with many different kinds of files, I could delete all of the text files by typing, at the "A" prompt (or separately indicating the proper device name/location as "A:"), the command "DEL `DV *". By using the asterisk "wild card" character, ("*"), I am able to operate on all files of a particular type, at a particular device location, without having to enter the specific file names. A very neato, new feature, isn't it?

It seems like I could continue to go on and on about Geneve, but, as usual, I find that the article is getting too long. Also, I had better save something for my next article. So, before I mosey off, into the setting sun, I will once again wish all of my readers the happiest of holidays and a blessed new year. See you all next year, but until then,

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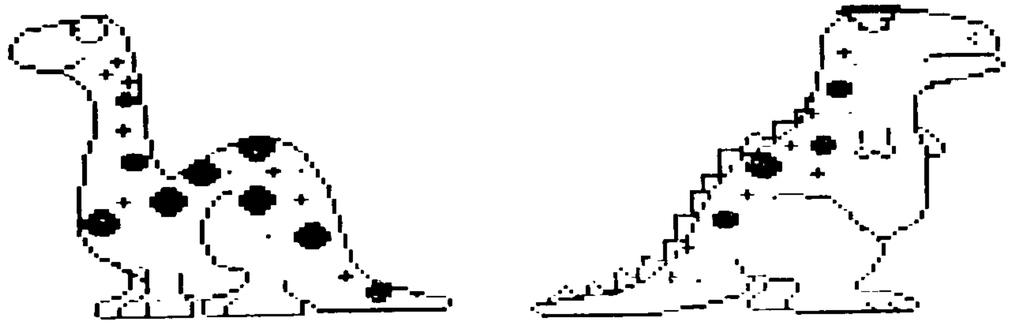

Oscar Bretana

PRTOUR III

This month we are going to depart a little from our PRBase tutorials, and talk about the new kid in town, and how it compares to our own kid.

Of course you know the new kid in town, or at least you've heard about him. He is good looking, powerful and everyone talks about him. Will he live to the great expectations??. Well, following are my opinions, after a brief review of this new kid, TI Base.

I have been given the opportunity of reviewing this new program, and perhaps in the near future, demo it for the CTIUG. The first thing I saw, of course, was the manual. If you belong to the group that like to try a program and then read the manual, you better change groups right now. Don't even dream of it!!!!. Unfortunately, if you decide to read the manual before hand, and have bad eyes, (like mine), you better run to get new glasses, it look like this manual was printed using one of the microscopic fonts from a "PLUS" diskette.

Well, bad start, however, I am persistent, and continued to go thru the documentation. Actually I read the manual twice, before trying any tricks. After all this reading, I decided, that if the program was really all it said to be, it should be really terrific. Well what do you think? I think it is really a very revolutionary kind or program for our machine. For those who have worked with DBase, RBASE or CONDOR,(MSDOS world), on their preliminary releases, will feel relatively comfortable with TI BASE.

There is really no point of comparison between PR Base and TI BASE, not that one is better than the other, but they are two completely different products, geared to completely different types of jobs. Loading TI BASE takes approximately two minutes. It may be loaded with XB, EA, or MiniMemory, being the MiniMemory the best option, (more on that later). While loading, the console locked up twice, after that I was able to load with mixed results. The program do have some problems which INSCEBOT has addressed and will be hopefully corrected in future versions.

From the point of designing your database, to the point of building reports, all is done using the procedural language provided. For those not familiar with procedural languages, think of a specialized programming language, with some built in functions very specific to data base management. This may

be very good in one sense, there is a lot of power, and there are not too many tasks which could not be accomplished with this program, however, it is definitely not the right choice for the casual user.

In order to create a data base, each field must be defined, including data type and length of field. The program support several data types. Some disk utilities are also provided within the language. A very clever approach is the way the program load segments as it needs them, making a good use of the limited memory. The memory allocated for variables and work areas, is depending upon of the module used for loading, If the MiniMemory is used there is approx 4 K's of extra space for data.perhaps in a next release they could use the 8 K's of SuperKarts, which are far more popular than the MiniMemory cartridge.

The program will support up to five databases opened simultaneously, giving a true relational capability. In the Tutorial furnished, there is a demo with three Databases. I ran part of this tutorial very successfully from the operational standpoint, however, the speed of linking information together, is really not impressive, but then, I might have been doing something wrong!!

Full control of the screen, input and output is given to the programmer. There are build in commands to place information on the screen in any location, for scrolling regions of the screen, conditional statements, and WHILE loops. You name it, it is there.

One thing which I do not see clear, is the future of such a program in the TI community. This is definitely, again, a very powerful tool, which is capable of very complex jobs, but it really takes time and study, to achieve any kind of results. Trying to use this program for simple tasks, (ie), mailing lists etc, would be like trying to drive 1/2 inch nails with a five pound hammer. Maybe the real future of TI BASE depends on the more advance users who may write standard command files and share them with the rest of us. At the close of this article, TI Base has a list price of approx. $25.00, but it is offered by Tenex at a discounted $19.xx

At the point of writing this paragraph, new information has reached us via the TI Fare. As usual, there were very nice demos by the Genial Software group, headed by Peter Hoddie. One of these demos, was their new product FIRST BASE. Being involved in this series on Data bases, I thought this would be a great opportunity to get a feel for this new program. Despite the fact that the demo was a short one, I did get a feel for this product. It seems that once more, Genial Software, came along with a real winner. First base, is a completely menu driven database, that will enable an untrained user to navigate easily and successfully through

the multiple screens.

First base offers an easy user interaction, with many query capabilities. It allow for global changes though the database, and even a "bridge" for PRBASE files. The only "but" that I can come up at this point, is the price, $50.00 seems a little over the hill for any TI software, specially for a Database, which goal is, undoubtedly, to take over the supremacy from PRBASE, which is definitely less powerful, but much less expensive.

TechTalk

by Mike Maksimik

Some of you may have followed TI's developments in the time that the 99/4A was at it's childhood. All sorts of plans, marvels, new things for the home computer that "was ahead of it's time." There were several peripherals developed by TI but were only released in tiny quantities, mostly to the TI employees that got the pick of the crop. Some of these never made it to the production lines, but only a few prototypes survived.

The modem card, which essentially was a Novation Cat 300 baud modem, was placed on a peripheral card, and a DSR ROM was given it to control very low-level functions, such as modem-to-vdp RAM interrupt routine, powerup routine, etc. It would work with a command module, like TE II just as the disk manager module works with the low-level routines in the disk controller to perform the DOS functions. Only a very few of these survived. Another little known card was the IEEE 488 bus controller card. It contained the TMS9914 GPIB (general purpose interface bus) that allowed the lab and mechanical equipment that used GPIB to interface to the TI. One could access the GPIB like a file device. This same standard is found in unexpected places. Any of you have a commodore 64? The communications bus used to connect it's ring-style bus of peripherals is a modified GPIB, one of commodore's own design. The SCSI interface (small computer systems interface) is essentially a multi-GPIB, allowing very fast buffered serial transfer between storage devices. SCSI also has interrupt lines to alert the host that data is waiting to be read or written. The VCR controller, a $500.00 range peripheral, along with support software, was introduced as a means to combine video from a VCR and the video from a TI. The card would control playback, hold, framing, and other functions. Digital Research created a similar product to control videodiscs that attached to an apple or a commodore 64, although much later than TI's development. The debugger card, a little known device, was in existence when the 99/4A was born. In fact, it's design can be rooted to the support hardware in the 990 minicomputer series. Essentially, the TMS9900 is a minicomputer on a chip. The editor/assembler GROM was a virtual image of the DX10 assembler used on the 990

minicomupter. Some directives one would only find on a minicomputer exist in the editor/assembler package, but were dormant in the 99/4A. The debugger board was designed to bring the 99/4A closer to a minicomputer's environment. The DEBUG program, included with the editor/assembler package, has several features that cannot be used without this piece of hardware. In fact, the editor/assembler looks as if it was taken direct from a 990 itself. The only added features were the GROM utilities, sucha VMBW, DSRLNK, LOADER, etc. that didn't support the features that a 990 could handle. It's too bad that TI wishes to keep the plans for this card on ice, it would be a dream to program with. It allowed multiple breakpoints by using the XOP 3 opcode, which would allow you to step your program through and look for errors or miscalculations. Although we can do this through software, the debugger board used a hardware approach. The design of this board, and what it contained, are up for grabs. If anybody knows, i'd appreciate you sharing with the rest of us. Send me a letter. Still another rare peripheral was the GROM library peripheral. It essentially was a super-widget that could access ALL of the GROM in the cartridges. This would be handy for TI BASIC, since TI BASIC searches external GROM for subprograms. TI extended BASIC does this too, but doesn't search DSR ROM when a program is running. Modules like TE II, personal record keeping, and extended BASIC could all be plugged in and the CALL routines could be accessible to BASIC. BASIC could use the commands it wished to whatever, and all you had to do is plug your favorite "flavor" modules into the library peripheral to get the necessary language expansion. Imagine a GROM cartridge giving advanced graphics to TI BASIC, another for print spooling, still another for expansion memory control. Others for high speed cassette routines, etc. so the language could expand by adding cartridges. It's the same technique used with the peripherals: the computer never becomes obsolete, because it automatically responds to any new device attached. This is true of the library peripheral. This is another device I would LOVE to see.

Some of us have the HEX-BUS controller. In the days of the 99/2, the CC40, and the 99/8, the hex-bus controller was introduced for the 99/4A to allow compatibility with these devices. Essentially, they were designed like the commodore 64's peripheral system, where a slow serial transfer was appropriate for the hex-bus devices, a disk drive wouldn't be feasible. So TI never considered the HEX-BUS disk drive. The Wafertape drive, the CAT modem, the RS232/parallel interface, and the 4-color printer, were all developed. All were battery operated and could fit in a briefcase, as did the CC40. For the 99/4A, it was an inexpensive means to expand.The hex-bus controller was a small device containing a DSR ROM that controlled the I/O drivers which "spoke" to the hex-bus peripherals. Since the main use was for the CC40, it wasn't pushed for the 99/4A. The 99/8 could also

rely on the PE BOX for it's devices. It had it's own special FLEX CABLE card, which used some special control lines to expand it's own capabilities. Since the 99/8 used a TMS9995, the same as the GENEVE, it could use the extra 3 address lines in the PE BOX, giving a total address space of 2 to the 19th power, or 512 k of directly addressable memory. Since some of these banks were probably switched, the address space grew to a total of 4096 k, which is sufficient for MOST of my needs. The speed of this processor was greater, and it's throughput was even greater, but more on that later. Some other control lines were used, some to indicate a 9900 or a 9995 present in the system, some to allow multi-level interrupts, still others to initiate HOLD sequences, which are found on the mainframes, and large multi-user systems as a way to deal with wasteful processing, and interrupt idling. TI had a HARD DISK controller in the plans, probably MYARC's, but the technical data I have is 1982. I own a rare card. Some of you may remember a company called A/D electronics, out of Sacramento, California. They produced a control card which allowed sampling of environmental data through an 8-bit analog-to-digital controller. This device allowed hookups of many items, such as temperature probes, light transducers, etc. and was mainly used as a scientific device. Some possible uses included home control, because it also contained a real-time battery backed clock. Plus, there were separate digital inputs and outputs, for switches and relays, respectively. My main use for the A/D card, FIRST ADE, is a mouse. The RADIO SHACK color mouse contains two potentiometers turned by a rolling motion of the mouse. The potentiometers, when interfaced with the ADC0809 chip, (two channels, x and y) gives me mouse control with TI ARTIST. I wrote the DSR myself, and have been using this device for about a year and a half. The MBP clock card is a similar device, although it does not contain a digital input or output array. The ADE card, however, could also switch external relays, or sample data on 16 lines (8 in, 8 out). If timing was correct, an 8-bit parallel interface was possible. I still use this card, and the clock is handy for keeping my p-system master disk up-to date. The FORTi music card was a device which allowed one to produce sound on not one but 4 extra TMS9919 sound generators. By arranging the frequencies on the 12 music channels available, different waveforms were possible. Now, with the FORTi, sounds even a c-64 owner could envy were possible. And, there were 4 percussion channels independent of each other. I can imagine "AXEL-F" running on this card!! And of course, we all know of the more common peripherals, the triple tech, the disk controllers, the 32k cards, te rs232 cards. Even these make our computers sophisticated enough to meet TI's long dead expectations. I also own the p-code card, and another article is devoted to THAT!

I mentioned the TMS9995 earlier. Just what exactly is a pipeline microprocessor? Well, the 9995 is not only fast,

but it has a distinct advantage over others in it's class, even the intel 80386. Those processors rely on expanded address lines and increased instructions to increase throughput. There was a deeper approach, one that TI envisioned in the 9995. A pipeline microprocessor is one that incorporates special hardware that allows it to have more than one part of the microprocessor running at the same time. These CONCURRENT functions provide that while one instruction is being decoded inside the chip, another is being fetched from memory. Still another is being executed after it has been decoded. At best, with top-down code, and very little jumps, the microprocessor can achieve a throughput 3 times, or more, depending on the level of pipelining, over a regular processor running at that speed. For example, if we put test code into a 9995 and a 9900 running at 12 MHZ, the worst case is that the two run even. But the 9995 can pipeline, and with the pre-fetch and post-store the 9995 can LOOK like it's running 16, 20, or even 24 MHZ. And with the reduced instruction set in the control ROM, the 9995 has a distinct advantage over an 80386, it's MUCH cheaper to produce. The control ROM is a hard-wired design, while the 80386 has to be programmed externally. It is an easy device to interface to a memory system, and with no-wait state static RAM, the memory-9995 combination (up to 4 megabytes) can be phenomenal.

Currently, I am working on a software project. It's a new DOS for the TI, somewhat reminiscent of COMMAND DOS that ryte data released some years ago. However, there is no image file required because the DOS I have resides in a E/A supercart, and the utilities that it needs are extracted from the E/A GROM--that way, I can restore the lower memory expansion to a defined state very quickly without reading from a disk drive. The DOS is completely self contained, and will provide a choice for you on the master title screen. I am a college student, doing projects to complete my final years of undergraduate study in computer science. This project was inspired by a need for a better operating environment for the TI as well as a need for me to see if it could be done. Well, I have succeeded! The DOS uses the DSRLNK utility to attach to the low level device drivers. It gives you the familiar A> DOS prompt, and will mimic DOS to a degree, but with one delightful exception--the DOS is being written by me, and I can have it do whatever I want it to! I will no longer be a slave to incomplete DOS commands or ambiguous and useless syntax, often the product of overpaid software developers. The commands are clear and precise, and the DOS is very short, only about 5k at this writing. Since most of the DOS is already present in our machines, in places like the E/A GROM, the disk controller ROM, the RS232 interrupt routine--all of these put together with the right glue can make a great DOS, and all I did was to provide the necessary glue for the parts, and it works! It has a batch file load and execute, D/F 80 loader (compressed/uncompressed), program file loader, dos

utilities (FORMAT, COPY, RENAME, DELETE, ASSIGN) and screen control commands (WAIT, BEEP, CLS, GOTOXY, PRINT, ECHO ON/OFF) and "smart" control keys, as well as a 255 character input queue for type-ahead. Many of the commands are internal, and they reside only in the supercart. Other commands can be created from object code, which you can create from any one of the compiling languages, or the assembler (i prefer the assembler) and by simply typing the name of the file at the command prompt, the file will be loaded and executed.

I hope to have some sort of language compiler for DOS, such as a basic/pascal compiler, to facilitate creation of programs and utilities. My plans include a file transfer utility (terminal emulator), windowing, an 80-column editor, and multiprogramming. If for no other reason, then to gain experience and to enjoy doing it on my $49.99 TI99/4A. Of course, I wouldn't dream of charging anyone for this DOS, and I've had some interesting suggestions for names. "F-DOS" by our own editor, BOB DEMETER, for FROGMAN-DOS, since my "other" hobby is SCUBA DIVING, "XIOS" for eXtended Input Output System, and whatever...I am using version 1.24, which is relatively complete. I would just like to add the bells and whistles, plus write a manual on it's use.

Now for some more TechTalk. If you are confused as to why computers like the c-64 and the apple all have DOS commands built in...well, the designers of those computers anticipated a disk system, and available to most users, so the operating system and BASIC language all had the DOS commands either in the disk unit itself, or in a disk BASIC which loaded in on powerup. Since TI did things a little differently, they preferred to make DOS a separate thing, with a disk manager module to handle disk tests and formatting. It seemed a little annoying that in order to rename a file from BASIC, you had to either load the program and save it under another name, or if it was a DATA file, you had to OPEN it and read all of the data, then re-save the data to disk under another OPENed file name. This could be terribly inconvenient to users, but consider what the others have...the c-64 must send all of it's DOS commands through a command channel, and the disk drive will run itself. It essentially is another computer, a 6502 based one, to be exact, that only accepts commands from a serial line and performs all of the disk commands. Imagine.. a computer so STUPID that you need TWO computers to run any disk software...and you would be paying for TWO computers also. Commodore doesn't tell the average users that they are essentially using TWO computers instead of one. Apple computers are also based on the 6502 series of microprocessors. Apple used an old method of running it's computers...just write a DOS and put it on disk, and when the computer is powered up, the DOS is loaded. Funny thing, though. Although Apple boasts of 64k of RAM, much of that is used to hold the resident DOS, and BASIC. If you want to load a program which needs the space allocated by DOS, you

are out of luck, since your program might make DOS calls to perform disk functions. And if DOS were overwritten, then when your program is finished, it must go back and load it all over again. And 6502 is not exactly the processor I would waste terribly expensive memory on, since it has a very limited instruction set, and things I take for granted now, like memory-to-memory word moves, multiplication, division, and subroutine branching would be terrible to implement on an apple of commodore 64. I just don't know how they have survived this long...

Our little TI, on the other hand, has a wonderful method for handling new devices. The GROM header, present on all ROM in the expansion box, and all command modules, is the link between the unknown and the known. It allows us to plug in new devices at any time in the future, and the operating system will immediately recognize the device, as if it were there from the beginning. This is what will keep our TI computers alive. The method of access is very similar to the IBM pc method. Each peripheral card has a certain address in the serial addressing fields. The operating system can turn on a card singly, look at what occupies a pre-defined memory area (>4000 to >5FFF for us) and can determine if the device exists. With the IBM, certain logical names are assigned to a physical device address, such as COM1:, TTY:, A:, LPT1:, and so on, and can be changed according to the user's wishes. This requires a small modification to DOS to accommodate the new device, and from then on, a new sub-version to dos is created. If the device is removed, an error will be issued since DOS can no longer locate the installed device.

The GROM header in the TI provides a standard table for finding a device quickly and efficiently. All of the devices use a pre-decoded 8k block of memory, and 8k is plenty for most devices. Since we are not limited to 64k of total address space (via memory paging in the MYARC or HORIZON ram cards), larger programs may occupy that memory and give our TI's a greater running capability. The IBM uses a segment register that is pre-decoded to page in banks of memory, which is essentially the same way the HRD or MYARC does it, so memory expansion is no problem. The safe area in the TI is the first ROM bank, which is the invaluable interrupt routine and powerup routines. the SUPERCART is the only save RAM alternative for a kernel or DOS, since it is battery backed and it remembers all the changes you have made to DOS. In the CRU, the only area you could use for your own bit-twiddling is the >400 to >1000 area, which is not decoded presently and could be wired to something (I will let you imagine that). It would not be a difficult task to interface an IBM card to the TI, provided you had the correct cross-wiring, and a ROM to control the new device. A few of us in the chicago users group will attempt this. The price of IBM cards is falling like a rock, and I don't see any interfacing pitfalls.

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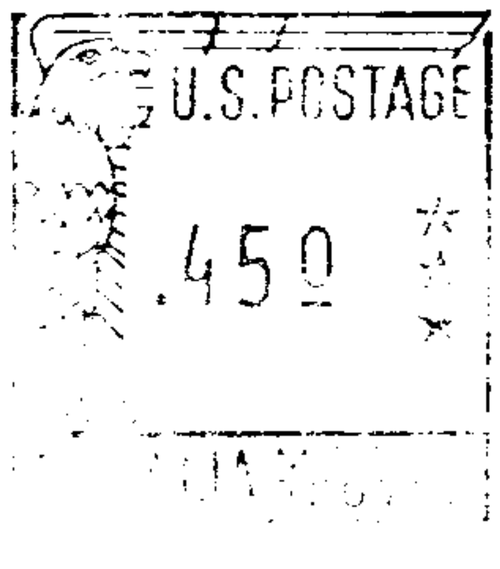
First Class Mail



Notes from the Editor...

We finally made it into the new year. I sincerely hope everyone had a safe, healthy and enjoyable holiday. Let us all hope that 1989 will be as nice to the 4A and it's clones as 1988 was.

Don't forget that our 7th annual faire is only 10 months away. Sandy, Marcy and Chris will need our help and support. Please read the President's article. If you know of any members that need assistance, guide them in the right direction.

Due to the length of some of the articles, I was forced to hold back a few articles this month. One was the Library Shelf article. It was short anyway. Authors, please try to keep your articles down to 4 pages. 200 to 250 lines. Thanks

Library catalogs are for sale for $2.00. Please pick one up today. 52 pages of great program listings. Disks 101 to 170 represent over 1,000 files. The library has a little bit of everything to offer.

Our group is now on Delphi. I have set up our own forum where we will have our own message base. Sample programs will be uploaded there as well as newsletter articles and membership info. The forum is ours to do with as we please. As time goes on I will be changing things around. Questions, comments and concerns about the group can be left there for me to read. Just type GR TI to find TI NET. Once there you will see the Chicago Area User Group. You can reach me by user name RBD. Hope to see you there.